

And I am proud of a nation that is not only tough and strong but a nation that is compassionate and cares deeply about the lives of all citizens around the world.

Thankfully, our Nation is united and determined, because we've got a lot more work to do. There are still a lot of them out there that would like to harm our country. And the best way to deal with them is to treat them like international criminals—precisely who they are—and keep them on the run and deny sanctuary and be patient and deliberate and tough and determined. The world watches the United States of America. If we were to blink, I think they might go to sleep. But I can assure you, we're not going to blink. We're determined. No matter how long it takes, this administration will lead this nation in chasing down the killers.

And not only that, we must not allow and will not allow the world's worst leaders to develop the world's worst weapons that could conceivably hold the United States and our allies and friends hostage. There is an axis of evil in the world, and the United States of America will deal with it in a firm way.

We are patient; we are deliberate; we will consult with our allies. But the world must understand, we love freedom; we hold freedom dear to our hearts. And we will not let our freedoms be threatened or our freedoms taken away from us.

You know, one of the most interesting—not interesting, one of the most compelling and moving moments during this—from September the 11th on, was Flight 93. It was a time when America got to see that there are people in our society who are willing to serve something greater than themselves. This was an airplane flying toward who knows—the White House or the Capitol. Americans on that plane on their cell phones told their loved ones goodbye. They said a prayer. They told them they loved them and said, “Let's roll,” and drove the plane in the ground so somebody else could live.

I believe out of this evil will come incredible good. On the one hand, if we're tough and strong and firm, the world will be more peaceful. I believe that when the United States leads with firm resolve, we have a much better chance to solve the world's most intractable problems.

But I also know that by unleashing the compassion and goodness of America, by following the example of others who are willing to sacrifice for something greater, that we can rally the great compassion of the country so that the American Dream extends its hope into every neighborhood in every corner of this great country. Out of evil will come great good, because the great strength of the Nation is in the hearts and souls of an incredible country.

Thank you all for being here. May God bless you all. Send Lindsey Graham to the United States Senate.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at the Palmetto Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to former South Carolina Governors Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., and David M. Beasley; Iris Campbell, wife of Governor Campbell; David H. Wilkins, speaker, South Carolina House of Representatives; Lt. Gov. Bob Peeler and Attorney General Charlie Condon of South Carolina; and Barry D. Wynn, former chairman, South Carolina Republican Party.

Remarks to First-Responders in Atlanta, Georgia

March 27, 2002

Thank you all very much. It is such an honor to be back in Atlanta, on the campus of one of the great universities in our country. I want to thank Wayne, the president of the university, for hosting us. And Saxby, thank you for your leadership and your strong support of our national effort to defend the homeland.

I want to thank the Governor and the first lady for being here. The last time I saw you was at Booker T. Washington High School. I was honored that you all came and took time out of your day to help us focus the Nation's attention on how best to secure the homeland.

I want to thank all who work at the Center for Emergency Response Technology, Instruction, and Policy. I have just seen a demonstration that helps prepare the emergency firefighters and—firefighters and the police how to take care of a disaster or an attack, how best to protect the citizens. This is an

innovative training center. And I want to thank all those involved with the center for your hospitality and for the chance to see firsthand how Atlanta and the State of Georgia are preparing for any possible attack. I particularly want to thank the guy who—they cut off his clothes and ran him through water. That goes beyond the call of duty to impress the President. *[Laughter]* There he is. Better you than me. *[Laughter]*

I'm also here to say thanks to those who wear the uniform, the policemen, policewomen, the firefighters, the emergency medical teams, all of whom work hours on hours to serve the people of Georgia and the United States of America.

My first responsibility as your President is to protect the American people and to provide a strategy that not only protects the American people but, should there ever be another incident, provides response, quick response for the American people.

I picked a good friend, a former Governor colleague of Roy and mine, to serve as the Director of Homeland Security. His job is to develop a strategy, a national strategy that uses national, State, and local assets to protect the homeland. And I picked a very good man to take on this assignment. Tom Ridge is doing a heck of a good job, and I'm so honored he left his job as Governor.

Part of that homeland security measure is to enhance the capacity of first-responders to deal with any kind of emergency. And that's what we're watching today, the training of first-responders. Those who have called into action must be able to save as many lives as possible. And that's why the budget I submitted for '03 has \$3.5 billion available for State and local governments to enhance the capacity of our first-responders to deal with any crisis that might arise.

As well, I submitted what we call a supplemental budget request; that's an emergency request. And part of that emergency request is nearly \$5 billion to make sure that we make our airports more secure and make our borders more secure. What we want to know in America is, who's coming into the United States and why and, if they're leaving, when they're supposed to leave, in order to make sure we protect the homeland.

So, in other words, what we've done is we're making the borders more secure. We're dealing with first-time responders to make sure they've got what's needed to be able to respond.

As well, I understand how it works in rural parts of our country, like Georgia. I've got a pretty good handle on what happens in rural Georgia. I cut my teeth on rural Georgia in 1968 and '69 as a pilot trainee in Valdosta, Georgia, home of the mighty Bulldogs. I think they're called. I also understand the role of the volunteer firefighter. You've got a lot of fine citizens serving as volunteer firefighters in your State. We've got a lot in my State. I'm a proud backer of the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department, Crawford, Texas.

And one of the things that I know is that not all rural counties, in Georgia or in Texas or anywhere else, can have all the equipment necessary to be an integral part of the first line of response. But I do know that neighbors like to work with neighbors. And I do know that one county might have a good hospital; another county might have the capacity to respond. So we've got money in our budget, Governor, for what I call mutual aid agreements. There's \$140 million in the budget to encourage rural counties to pool their resources, their talents, their time to be able to respond to any kind of attack. We've got a big focus on the big cities like Atlanta and the surrounding counties. But we've also got to make sure that our rural areas all across America also have got a capacity to respond.

You also need to know that we are spending a great deal of time trying to gather as much intelligence as we possibly can to make sure that we follow every lead to protect the American people. If we get a hint that somebody is coming, we're going to respond. We're chasing down every—*[applause]*—and part of a modern homeland defense system is one that shares information more timely, not only amongst Federal agencies but amongst State and local authorities.

The enemy is a dangerous group of people. There's no way to rehabilitate these folks. They are murderers. And they hate what America stands for. See, they can't stand the thought that we're a society that welcomes

all religions, that we value freedom of religion as a part of our basic core. They hate the idea of political discourse and debate, freedom to speak. They don't even like the free press. They don't like much about what America stands for. And I want to issue this warning to the American people, that they're still after us.

But we're on alert. And I want to thank all the local law enforcement officials and everybody else who has got positions of responsibility for paying attention and for reporting anything that seems out of the ordinary, so we can follow it up to make sure it's not a real threat to America.

But the surest way that we protect the homeland is to run them down one by one and bring them to justice, and that's what we're going to do.

I want to thank you for giving me the chance to come and share with you some of my thoughts about this war against terrorists and terrorism. First, I see a lot of young folks here. I want to assure you of a couple of things about our country. First, we don't do this, take this action, out of revenge. We seek justice, not revenge. We seek justice. And secondly, we take this action because we believe so deeply in freedom. We love our freedom. And this Nation will stand strong and steady when it comes to defending our freedoms.

I also want you to know that I laid out a doctrine—and it's really important for when the United States speaks, it means what they say. And I said that if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist; if you feed one or hide one, you're just as guilty as those who came and murdered thousands of innocent Americans. It's an important part of any foreign policy to do what you say you're going to do. And we did. Thanks to the mighty United States military, the Taliban no longer is in power.

But I want to make two points to the young: One, we're not alone in this. There's a vast coalition of other countries that love freedom like we do. And secondly, your country went into Afghanistan not as conquerors, but we were liberators. It is hard to believe what I'm about to tell you, but there are hundreds of young girls in Afghanistan who weren't allowed to go to school. And

thanks to the United States Government and the coalition we put together, last weekend children—boys and girls—got to go to school in Afghanistan.

But our defense of freedom is far from over. While we have held the doctrine in Afghanistan, the doctrine of "thou shall not harbor a terrorist," there still are killers running loose; there just are. And we must deal with that fact. And the best way to deal with it is to make sure there is no sanctuary, no haven, no place for them to group up or to train. The best way to deal with that is to cut off their money, is to insist that you're either with us or you're against us, insist that there be action when it comes to nations in the world, is to hold people accountable in the name of freedom.

And so the United States Government is today determined and steadfast and patient and resolved to chase down any criminal, any international terrorist, and bring them to justice. And the good news is the American people understand the cause. They understand the need. They understand that history has called us into action, and we must not blink. And we must not grow weary, because I repeat: We fight for freedom. We fight for values we hold so dear and precious.

Now, I believe that by being firm and disciplined and determined, we can achieve peace throughout the world. I believe out of this incredible evil that was done on September the 11th, we can realize good. And one of the good is going to be peace.

It is awfully hard to realize there can be peace in a place like the Middle East. My heart breaks for those innocent lives that are lost on a daily basis. And today there was another suicide bomber who murdered innocent Israelis. This callous, this coldblooded killing, it must stop. I condemn it in the most strongest of terms. I call upon Mr. Arafat and the Palestinian Authority to do everything in their power to stop the terrorist killing, because there are people in the Middle East who would rather kill than have peace.

If the United States is firm and strong in routing out terror, if the United States stays steady in our quest for peace, I believe we can achieve peace in places where people think we'll never have peace. The road is going to be hard, there's no question about

it. It'll test our will; it'll test our determination. But the enemy that struck us is going to find out what we're made out of. They've already found out a small taste about what we're made out of.

You know, when they hit us, they must have thought we were so self-absorbed and so materialistic that we would sue them. [Laughter] They were wrong. They're also wrong about one other thing. Our Nation—our Nation is not only a strong and determined nation, we are a compassionate nation. We're a nation who will show the world our true face by not only putting a military in place that's well paid, well trained, well equipped but also by loving a neighbor like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

Today I had two fine Americans—if you all would stand, please—come out to the airport. These good folks take time out of their lives. These are citizens that have heard a call to love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves. They spend extra time helping a neighbor in need. They've asked the question, "What can I do to make my society a better place"—you can sit down if you like—"how can I serve something—how can I serve something greater than myself?" Thank you all for coming to the airport. Thank you for your service to your community. Thank you for teaching children to read. Thank you for mentoring. Thank you for having served in AmeriCorps.

You see, if you want to help in the war against terror, find somebody whose heart may be broken and help mend it by loving them. Walk across the street and say to a shut-in, "I care for you." Mentor a child on how to read. If you're a mom or a dad, love your children with all your heart and all your soul. It's the accumulation of millions of acts of kindness and decency that define the true nature of our country. And by loving a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, you help stand square in the face of evil.

The evil ones hit us. I believe the world can be more peaceful. I know our Nation can be more compassionate. And as a result, those who died on September the 11th and those who died subsequently defending freedom will not have died in vain.

Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Georgia Institute of Technology. In his remarks, he referred to G. Wayne Clough, president, Georgia Institute of Technology; Representative Saxby Chambliss of Georgia; and Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia and his wife, Marie.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 5762

March 27, 2002

I send greetings to all Americans and to all people around the world who are observing Passover this week, which begins at sundown on March 27.

Passover marks a uniquely special time in the Jewish calendar, commemorating Judaism's foremost traditions of freedom, faith, and family. In celebrating the Israelites' liberation from enslavement and their exodus from Egypt, Passover reminds Jews of their sacred tradition. It is a time for Jewish families to share together in long-established rituals and to offer prayers that celebrate the renewal of hope in the blessings of freedom.

The story of the Exodus speaks across the millennia. By God's power and blessing, the children of Abraham overcame Pharaoh's tyranny forty centuries ago and found freedom in the promised land. Every year at Passover, Jews relive the experience of the Exodus and remember the miracles that provided them their path to freedom.

As we seek peace throughout the world, we are reminded that freedom is a precious gift. At this Passover, I hope that people of every faith will affirm that freedom is the right of all people. And as Jews observe this sacred time, I hope that your faith will be strengthened in the remembrance of your miraculous and living heritage.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a blessed Passover.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.